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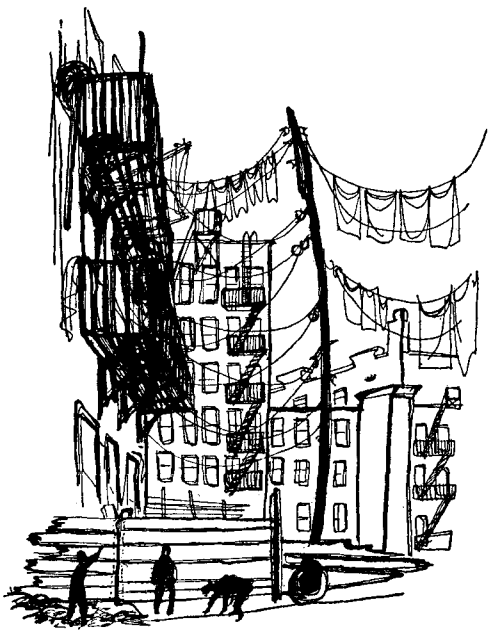
UNREST BEHIND THE CURTAIN

—Norbert Muhlen

THE

Commonweal



THE CHILDREN OF POVERTY

by Eileen Fantino

George N. Shuster Seymour Krim Ned O'Gorman

Thomas P. Heath Frank Getlein

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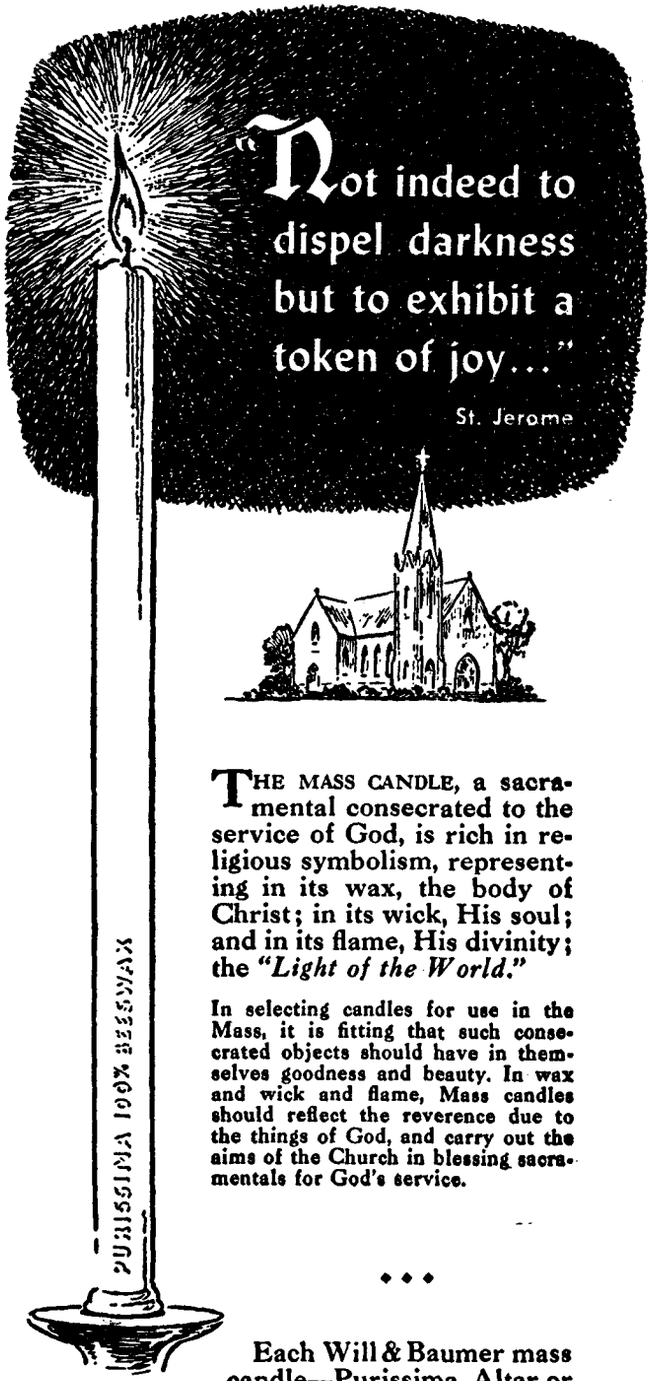

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The Commonweal

week by week

THE WALL IS COLOR

IN this issue Eileen Fantino tries to break through a wall—the wall that separates life in East Harlem from the experience of most Americans. That wall is not an easy one to penetrate, for it is the wall of color. Even in the midst of America's riches, poverty is known by people of all races. But the children of poverty described in Miss Fantino's article bear a special burden. Early in life, most of them learn that the pigmentation of their skin makes real escape from their world almost impossible.

Miss Fantino writes in some detail of the Puerto Rican in New York and her article may properly be taken as a challenge to and an indictment of the residents of that city. Yet her article has still larger implications.

In this land of immigrants, most new arrivals were originally met with hostility. The Irish, the Poles, the Italians—all were called dirty, clannish, criminally inclined. All settled in voluntary ghettos in the poorest districts. All received a poor press and lived at first behind walls. But the boundaries of their ethnic ghettos were not impassable. Opportunities for education and better jobs came along, and second-generation Irish, Italians, Poles jumped over the walls.

This was the traditional part of the immigrant in our society. Life at the bottom of the ladder was not easy, but the important thing is that it could and did pass. The big question with the Puerto Ricans revolves around that point. Will they be able to break down the walls that now separate them from American life? Or will the second- and third-generation Puerto Ricans still be confined to a ghetto?

The Puerto Rican who descends from an airplane in New York has many things in common with the traditional European immigrant fresh off the boat. Both have trouble with a new language, with new ways. Both usually enter American economic life as hewers of wood and drawers of water. Both are keenly interested in opportunities for their children. These things and many more they share. But there is one big difference, and that is color.

Puerto Ricans range in color from very light to very dark. Light-skinned Puerto Ricans have an easier time of it. The darker-skinned Puerto Ricans find harder going. Many congregate perforce in the East Harlem area described by Miss Fantino. There they cling to their own ways and to their own Spanish language, partly because of the homesickness known to all who dwell in a strange and alien land, and partly because they have discovered how important skin color is in American life.

Countless editorials and articles have been written to describe the burden involved in being an American Negro, but no editorial could make its case as convincing as this one simple fact. Despite popular feeling against them, the Puerto Ricans will cling to their own ways as long as they are convinced that in the long run they will receive better treatment as Puerto Ricans than they would if people classified them as Negroes. And this is why the problem of the Puerto Ricans in New York has the most challenging implications for people all over the United States.

ALTHOUGH there are smaller Puerto Rican colonies in cities like Chicago and Youngstown, the biggest percentage of Puerto Ricans live in New York. Their assimilation into American life is largely New York's problem. But there are few cities in the United States which do not have a sizable Negro population. And an unbiased look over the wall would show that in most American cities, North and South, thousands of American Negroes live in conditions as desperate as those in East Harlem. Puerto Rican families are not the only ones forced to live in converted coal-bins. In city after city, the overcrowding and exploitation that prevail in the Negro ghettos almost pass belief. Yet so separate are these two worlds that for most dwellers in the white world knowledge

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is as hard to come by as escape is for the residents of the Negro slum.

In common with countless other Americans, the editors of this magazine hailed the decision of the Supreme Court a year ago which banned segregation in the public schools. And we hope that the recent, moderately worded implementation-order will prompt men of good will to a speedy execution of the spirit of that decision. Segregation in the schools should and will go, and this is a major step. But when the fact of race can condemn a child to life behind ugly walls in a city slum, no one should imagine that the work of justice has more than begun.

BACK IN SAN FRANCISCO

WHEN the delegates assemble for the United Nations' tenth anniversary session next week, they will encounter a prospect containing much that is familiar and much that has changed since the adoption of the Charter. In 1945 the emphasis focused on preventing a recurrence of aggression in general; today many of the delegates are intent on forestalling any further Communist aggression. The original object of preserving peace among the nations has been greatly reinforced by subsequent fears of full-fledged thermonuclear warfare. Developments the world over in the post-war years have tended to make the objectives for the UN more immediate and more specific.

The United Nations organization itself has grown. Its impressive New York headquarters succeeds in conveying to even the casual visitor the cooperative and hopeful spirit that prevails among its permanent personnel of many races and tongues. On the terrain of enforcing peace the UN has undergone its baptism of fire (preeminently in Korea) and its truce commissions are today on the scene of conflict in such far-flung areas as the Holy Land and Viet Nam.

If the pages of The Commonweal serve as an index, American hopes for the UN at the time of its founding in San Francisco were on the limited side—especially in view of the veto and certain other provisions of the Charter. We regarded it at the time principally as a forum wherein the various member nations could readily exchange views. We held that "Everything still depends upon the integrity and good will of the nations involved."

Few observers were, however, prepared for the Soviet tactics of aggression and flagrant obstructionism that set in soon after San Francisco. These succeeded in blocking the workings of the newborn international organization at nearly every turn. But if Soviet obstruction tactics succeeded in all but paralyzing UN political activities in those early months, it must not be forgotten that the televising of these fruitless UN sessions—and of Soviet Russia's delegates in action there—disclosed to large numbers of Americans, for the first time, the existence and nature of the Soviet menace. That in itself was a substantial accomplishment.

The hopes that soared highest at San Francisco—for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization—have been amply justified. UNESCO has been held back by insufficient funds, lethargy, hostile governments, wars and tensions and indifference of various sorts. But the accomplishments of the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization and other UNESCO subsidiaries are many. Hence the UN has regained some of the prestige it lost during the Soviet conquests of its early days.

While UNESCO has been developing and expanding its manifold constructive activities in war-torn, under-developed and other lands during the past decade, the Security Council and the General Assembly have continued to function. Moreover, the part the UN has played in such historic steps as the peaceful withdrawal of the Dutch from Indonesia must be remembered. Its stand in Korea has served potential aggressors as a warning since, whatever the final outcome for the Korean peninsula itself.

Hence there is reason to celebrate this anniversary in San Francisco even while the Big Four Foreign Ministers meet nearby to study the various implications of the Soviet Union's all-out drive for neutralization. The UN obviously represents an

NEXT WEEK

FREDERICK D. WILHELMSEN writes about the conservative vision and its contemporary meaning.

"A modern traditional society gets its heart from the medieval dream. Although the religious vision begins to recede down the corridors of time, although the symbolic battalions of God begin to march out of history, their muted drums can still be heard sounding through the fields and forests of the fatherland. A sense of the sacred lies over all things, and man, in the words of that great and haunted figure Martin Heidegger, is content simply to 'let being be.' If modern man is the demiurge who reworks creation in his own image, traditional man—even as he survives into our day—is the man who celebrates the things that are."

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advance in international cooperation, although it remains far short of the ideal of a world organization that would guarantee justice, security and peace and administer a universally accepted code of law.

THE REFUGEE TRICKLE

TWO elements have conspired to defeat the objectives of the 1953 Refugee Relief Act: certain provisions of the Act itself and the hypercaution with which it is administered by Scott McLeod, security officer of the State Department, and his associates. The law provides for the admission into the United States of 209,000 victims of totalitarianism in the postwar world by December 31, 1956. A certain speeding of the process has been noted in recent months, but even so only 21,360 persons had been admitted to this country under its provisions by May 13—and of these but 3,313 were classified as refugees.

President Eisenhower's recent message to Congress on the subject is therefore an urgent one, for it proposes ten changes that should speed up matters. The changes he asks Congress to enact are extremely reasonable in themselves. For instance, it is hardly necessary for each of these immigrants to have an individual American sponsor who promises not to allow him to become a public charge, since there are well-established voluntary agencies that will agree to take responsibility for this newcomer to our shores.

There are other key points. Supplying a continuous two-year history has proved too much for a number of brave rebels against totalitarianism. Quotas from certain European countries have exceeded the demand, especially where prosperity has lessened the economic pressures. Mr. Eisenhower declares that unused quotas might well be pooled in some way, perhaps for orphans irrespective of country. The President also calls for other revisions that would make possible the achievement of the humanitarian purposes of the 1953 Act.

Happily, Congress has indicated that it will go along. But what about the way in which the law is administered? Might it not also be possible quietly to pass on the word to the State Department to revise its screening process, too?

CATHOLIC PRESS CONVENTION

THERE are several Catholic publications in the United States that hold a position far on the political right. These publications attract considerable attention, and some non-Catholics may have gained the impression that Catholic journalism in the United States is wholeheartedly committed to the camps of Senators Knowland and McCarthy. Anyone who reads the resolutions adopted at this year's Catholic Press Convention, however, should be encouraged.

Meeting in Buffalo last month, editors from Catholic newspapers and magazines throughout the country debated and endorsed a number of statements touching on various controversial problems in American life. These statements should be widely circulated because they give the lie to charges that American Catholic opinion is preponderantly dedicated to political reaction.

On international questions, for example, the Association urged the United States "to play a responsible role in international organizations such as the United Nations; to remove all possible obstacles to the free flow of goods and supplies, and to share with those in need its surpluses and technical knowledge."

On the question of school segregation the Catholic editors urged early implementation of the Supreme Court decision to end it, and stated that the goal of achieving racial equality has made the United States, "as a reflection of democratic government and Christian civilization, the object of critical consideration in the eyes of the world."

The Convention also expressed "vigorous opposition to the enactment of such anti-social legislation" as right-to-work laws and, in the area of migratory workers, called upon Congress "to resist continued selfish pressure and enact legislation that will bring order and justice" to a situation which now involves "the exploitation of helpless laborers."

The Association also adopted a code of fair publishing practices for Catholic papers in this country. Among its tenets are: (1) "We will not judge men guilty of wrongdoing unless we can substantiate their guilt, nor will we mistake disagreement with our own judgment for moral wrongdoing or intellectual inconsistency," and (2) "We will give to those persons and groups whose reputations we have questioned ample opportunity to defend themselves in the pages of our publications."

These and other resolutions adopted by the Convention express, of course, only the majority opinion among Catholic editors present. Other Catholics are free to disagree on such questions as support for the UN or opposition to right-to-work laws. But those who do disagree seem to represent a minority voice in American Catholic publishing. For, judging from this year's Convention, the consensus of Catholic editorial opinion in these matters is decidedly forward-looking.

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ENTER GAW, IN A FORD

PERHAPS it is the great genius of America that revolutions come quietly. Twenty-five years ago unions in the mass-production industries were unknown. Not two decades ago, Memorial Day pickets in Chicago left their dead and dying in front of the struck steel plants and fled before the fire of local police. In the early days of the United Automobile Workers, Walter Reuther dared to hand out union handbills at Ford in Detroit, and for his temerity he was almost crippled by company guards. Now Ford and the UAW have reached agreement on the principle of the guaranteed annual wage. Almost certainly this idea will be extended throughout the entire automotive industry, and the same principle will then substantially alter employer-worker relationships in all major U.S. industries. Achieving this long-sought goal quietly and without a crippling strike was a great accomplishment, and the outcome represents a tribute to the maturity of all parties involved. The Ford-UAW agreement marks the passing of an important milestone in the history of industrial relations in the United States.

DEFENDING THE FIFTH

THE Supreme Court recently announced a decision which, though it states no new principle of law, has great significance as vindicating traditional American procedure. In this decision the Court moved towards rescuing the Fifth Amendment from its many detractors.

Three witnesses before the House un-American Activities Committee had refused to answer questions about Communist Party affiliation and were indicted for contempt. The government argued that they had not adequately claimed the protection of the Fifth Amendment since they had invoked it in connection with the guarantees of the First Amendment. The witnesses maintained that the unusual use they had made of the Fifth was sufficient to protect them—and the Court, speaking through Mr. Chief Justice Warren, agreed with them.

"A claim of privilege [under the Fifth Amendment] does not require any special combination of words," Mr. Warren stated in the majority decision. He spoke of the self-incrimination clause as a privilege "hard earned by our forefathers," a safeguard "against heedless, unfounded or tyrannical prosecution." Its value is such, he said, that it must be "accorded liberal construction in favor of the right it was intended to secure."

At another time Mr. Warren's words might have been a commonplace reminder of the obvious: today they are not. In recent years, large numbers of politicians have sought to make "Fifth Amendment" a term of contempt. Phrases like "Fifth Amendment Communist" and "Fifth Amendment general" have been bandied about by demagogues, and there has been a danger that they would make one of the Constitution's most valuable guarantees a synonym for treason. They have now been rebuked by the nation's highest court, and this is a good sign of our return to reason.

WHO SUFFER PERSECUTION

PERSECUTION of the Church continues in Argentina. Priests are being imprisoned on the slim pretexts familiar to totalitarianism; "political" Catholicism is being denounced and public manifestations of the faith are forbidden. On May 25 alone, more than one hundred and twenty-five Catholics were arrested by the Perónists. Any last chance of rapprochement between the Church and the dictator seems gone.

And yet, out of so much violence and injustice, one may hope that some good will emerge, for the Church itself as well as for politics in Argentina. The old warning "put not your trust in princes" has achieved a new meaning in an age when princes have been replaced by dictators. There is thus hope that, free of dependence on the State, the Church in Argentina will achieve a new freedom, a new vigor. And, disillusioned with the dictatorship, a strong Christian Democratic opposition to Perónism may at last emerge. The harsh lessons of Caesaro-Papism are painful to learn, but, once learned, they are not easily forgotten.

In the suffering of the Church in Argentina many Catholics are learning these lessons now. Many who expressed no word of opposition to Perón in the past now proclaim their unyielding opposition to everything he stands for. Some who formerly saw him as a protector of religion now recognize him for the power-hungry totalitarian he always was. In the persecution of the Church they can see dangers to which they were previously blind.

We learn injustice when it touches us—and often only then. The record of the Perón regime was ugly from the start, and it seems inevitable that the dictator's force should eventually have been turned against the Church. Now we must hope that out of this darkness a new day for Argentina and for the Church may come.

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The Children of Poverty

THEY LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE SLOWLY AND INEVITABLY ESCAPE BECOMES THE MOTIVATION OF LIFE

EILEEN FANTINO

WALKING through East Harlem ghettos you're swallowed up by the motion and sound of blaring music, rhythmic and electric, the pattern of children running through empty lots piled high with ripe garbage, darting between horn-blasting cars and lemon-ice carts, sullen ragged shadows of half-dead men huddling in a doorway waiting for the dope-pushers to bring a precious dose of heroin, families overflowing from the crowded dark tenements sitting on the front steps or on the fire escapes to get a breath of air and watching the never-ceasing play which life has become. Each small candy store is a world unto itself where youngsters listen to the magic pulsation of the juke box, their only touch of forgetfulness, where they watch knowingly the intrigue of a dope sale on the street outside, where slowly and inevitably escape becomes the motivation for life. Midnight finds six-year-olds still wandering the streets like old men, with nothing waiting at home but an empty ice box, kerosene smoke-stained walls, pungent smells from the broken and flooded hall toilets and parents beaten down by years of struggle drinking up the food money in a desperate attempt to recapture an illusion of life.

This is the world unknown to the "average citizen," a world which a casual glance cannot fathom, a world which repels and frightens like a screen of dense smoke behind which mysteries are revealed. But poverty, and the disintegration which is the shore to which it flows, are not the mystery they seem. They are caused by the greed of man and the ultimate rejection of the concept of the brotherhood of man and our responsibility to each other. All the disturbed children roaming the streets, running around in wolf-pack gangs, defying the hostile world which has rejected them, abandoned them to misery, broken their spirits and planted in them a fire of hatred which leaps out to injure and destroy what has condemned them to hunger and humiliation, which labels them as inferior beings somehow unworthy of the goods of the earth—these children are one result of the coldness, indifference and greed of society.

The children of poverty have hunger-dimmed eyes; they have ragged, dirt-encrusted clothes to wear with ripped shoes, small, and crushing their feet into weird shapes. The calm sleep of childhood is to them a nightmare of beating off vermin and rats, huddled in one damp bed with their brothers and sisters in small overcrowded apartments, shivering in the winter and suffocating in the summer. They are exposed to violence of mind and body when the adults of their world sporadically fall under their burdens and cry out in anguish, often because they lack even the comfort of knowing they can get up in the morning and give their children something to eat.

Parents see their children crack under the daily tensions, begin to steal, and worse, fall prey to the dope-pushers who ride through the streets in sleek cars, cars which the addicts keep clean for a bit of what to them has become life's blood. These dope-pushers accumulate huge fortunes; with prison records on narcotics charges a yard long, they hire expensive lawyers and always manage to be right back on the beat while young people they have corrupted rot in jail for lack of bail money, smart lawyers and "influence." Children become involved in dope-pushing, act as middlemen for a few pennies or to get "the stuff" for an addicted brother or friend who is going through the tortures of the damned because he has no money to buy it and cannot turn to anyone for help. In one school over thirty girls were found to have needle marks on their arms from heroin injections. Yet the racketeers are left free to kill with their slow poison.

THIS is the kind of thing the outside world finds hard to believe—that dope addiction in children is encouraged by offering them free dope for "kicks" in order to bleed them for the rest of their lives. But it is true, and the result is a slavery that is unparalleled. Even young boys who go away for the "cure," and go through months of physical and mental torture are forced for lack of jobs and follow-up guidance to go right back into the same neighborhoods where the pushers are waiting for them. Only in rare cases is such a cure more than temporary, because the in-

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dividual goes back to the same problems and the temptation for escape is too strong.

The terrible prevalence of dope addiction one finds here is directly related to the intolerable conditions of poverty and slum living, the lack of stable guidance by parents, the indifference of society and social agencies to the personal torments, frustrations and neuroses which bear down on these children. Even where an adequate "youth program" exists, it cannot compensate for the conditions under which the child must live and for the feeling of despair and rejection which poverty-weakened and subjugated groups have to endure. The consciousness of society's attitude, the feeling of racial inferiority which is so ingrained from childhood, the prejudices which make children so aware of their color and origins and of the contempt in which society holds them, cause an inestimable damage which cannot easily be remedied and for which we all share guilt. This awareness, especially on the level of color, has penetrated deeply; there are strange manifestations which show how deeply. There is, for example, a custom of taking milk of magnesia during pregnancy with the idea that it will lighten the color of the baby's skin. It will take more than a little interracial education to erase the effects of racist thinking that has so long poisoned our society, even among those whose religious tenets forbid them to look upon any man as innately inferior.

The psychological effects of prejudice are closely intermingled with the economic effects. The Negro and Puerto Rican are reduced to subservience and trembling before the gods of business when they go out to earn their family's bread. They are considered for almost nothing but the jobs still associated with slavery and servitude. To see them suffer the indignities to which they are subjected is to see the image of God beaten down by the pride and arrogance of the "lily white," the moneyed and the "respectable" who are afraid to walk through Harlem after dark.

THE migration of thousands of Puerto Ricans to New York City spread consternation among those who want New York to be populated by "nice people" like themselves. By virtue of the political fact of citizenship, the Puerto Ricans were able to come to the U.S. They came to escape living in shacks on stilts over foul waters, with no sanitary facilities, no income, no land to till. They fled hunger, disease and death which shadow the island's warm sun. Their coming gave us an unexcelled opportunity to analyze our society and its values.

To many, the coming of the Puerto Ricans was like a great swarming of birds, darkening the streets, making alien noises which filled the subways, settling down in the dark slum areas and huddling together in the protection of crowded ghettos. Unfriendly expressions were heard all over the city: "They take our money and won't even learn the language," a loud voice says, and two women talk and laugh as the intricate rhythms of their tongue unknowingly mock their accuser. The city shivers, mans its home relief offices, and grits its teeth: "You can't stop them, they're citizens." And in the cool quiet of the rectory, "These people must learn to support the Church." Or, "Lady, the parish can't give out food coupons until we know these things. Are you married?"

SO it goes on. We met the challenge of their coming on the shallow level at which we found ourselves. Poverty-stricken humanity with its inescapable "hereness" was an inconvenience. We didn't want them to get too close, even those of us who did not resent the financial help given them by the Welfare Department—as so many did, even though the department announced that Puerto Ricans were the quickest to get off relief and were always eager for any job. Long years of poverty had given some of their faces a hollow look and they were too much like a reminder of the death which befalls the masses of starving and depressed people throughout the world. The safe white world faces the restless stirring of the poor around the globe, but we got a taste of the "depressed masses" right in New York and the best we could do was to dole out a few pennies, muttering under our breaths and walking quickly past.

Incident after incident points to our failure to meet the situation with justice and love. We are very used to scorning the poor or ignoring them as members of some strange breed which has nothing in common with us. One woman who went to the Welfare Department for aid asked for enough money in advance for carfare home. She was pregnant, suffering from a kidney

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disease and had a note from the hospital about her condition. No one would give her the money. She walked thirty-five blocks with her young son and then collapsed on the stairs of her apartment. Another young mother who took her small daughter to the hospital because she had been bitten by a rat for the second time was accused by a social worker of neglecting her children. Every penny the city puts in their hands is measured—to the last grain of rice. The city is god; it has the power of life and death. It says eat and you eat. It says starve and you starve. The Welfare check is bread that becomes a stone because of the humiliation that goes with it.

What we can get from the Puerto Ricans we take; their cheap labor is employed washing dishes and in sweatshops, often enough at less than legal minimum wages. Our landlords collect exorbitant rents for crumbling slums. We sell them cheap junk for their homes and sew them up in lifetime debts with interest rates as high as the traffic will bear. All the racketeers descend upon them.

To the Puerto Ricans, the charity of Catholics often seems as much a mockery as the charity of the state. There is little sense of shock over the exploitation of the poor, little exchange of love with them. A day's pay to Catholic Charities is supposed to take care of everything, but it doesn't even scratch the surface. Except in rare instances, the really poor are completely out of reach. Expenses which are in the luxury class are considered before the needs of the hungry children in our city. Slum parishes exist as though they were in a different world, as indeed they are. But even in the slums the Church is not really reaching the poor. To the average Puerto Rican, the parish rectory is a place where you knock at the door, timidly. A place where you go if you have a suit to wear and a clean shirt and shoes to put on, not where you go in your hunger, anguish and despair. Most Catholics do not hear the cries of the poor because we are too far away, too insulated. We rest because we have our institutions to "take care of the needy." But who will kiss the lepers? Who will wash the feet of the poor? Who will feed the multitudes? Who will hold back the waters of despair until they are safe?

NO sense of inadequacy is keener than that of anyone who has tried to heal the breach, who has tried to break through the barrier of coldness which separates us from the poor. You become so aware of your own selfishness, love of convenience and ease, your freedom to think and move without the burdens of others on your shoulders. To enter the world of poverty is like having a layer of skin burned off, that layer which insulates against shock and says, "All is well."

The Catholic Worker movement has attempted to heal this breach by pointing out the evils in society which perpetuate poverty, by proposing solutions, and primarily by accepting personal responsibility in service to the poor not in the spirit of the "do-gooder" but in the spirit of justice, by the acceptance of voluntary poverty, and by working to change society so that the fruits of labor belong to all and not to a privileged few. When Mary Ann McCoy and I came to East Harlem and opened a children's center, the children came streaming in full of tensions, sadness and exuberance; they painted and screamed, swung on the see-saw, eventually knocked out all the store-front glass and most of the windows, ripped a piano up in one month, gave song-and-dance shows, fought, laughed, and cried. In short we had much fun, yet woven into all of our activities was the tragedy hidden behind the walls of the slum buildings where they lived. It was a world we had not really entered. But soon we became drawn into their lives. Parents came over to get clothes and occasionally food and told us of the hardships and tragedies they faced every day. We began to feel poverty, to touch it. We saw the desolation in hungry and disturbed children, heard the lamentations of the parents which were like the psalms. These were the poor who cry out throughout time for deliverance and bread.

TWO years later we moved from our store front into an apartment a short distance away. We wanted to be able to feed the children when they were hungry, to give them some of the atmosphere of a home which they could feel was their own and where they could always come if they needed us. Helen Russell joined us after spending a few months working at the Catholic Worker House of Hospitality on Chrystie St. Scores of kids were soon banging down the door, and parents came to us in emergencies. Helen, who is a nurse, swabbed the cuts, and Mary Ann who is home during the day took the seriously sick to the clinic at Mt. Sinai and made trips to the parks and nearby Ward's Island. Our living room became the playroom and although not as many children could fit, we had fewer riots and were able to get to know the children better as well as cook some eggs when someone said he had not eaten all day.

When summer came, Helen and Mary Ann took groups of about ten children to an impromptu camp at the CW Peter Maurin Farm. They brightened with the steady diet of sun and fresh air after the dank smoky air which filled their lungs all year round. The trees and beauty of the country were like a miracle to them and they came back full of stories, and happy. Soon the world of dope-pushers, hunger and dirt was around them again and they could only imagine the

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world of wide blue skies and clean fruitful earth they had known in the summer.

Again we were caught up in the daily tragedies. We listened to the teen-agers express their feeling of alienation from the "outside world;" we were called into scenes of mental breakdown which left us shaken for days; we listened, helpless, while children told us of their older brothers and sisters who were going to jail on narcotics charges. We grew to know poverty; its face, its screams, its groanings, its flashes of joy, its warmth, the warmth of those who spend their last $2 to buy you beer because you bring their children an Easter basket. We saw the steely clutch of hysteria and brought small comfort to children who in the face of tragedy sit quietly in a dark room watching bugs crawl along the floor.

The activities of the city go on—the neon lights shout the praises of the age of progress and profit while the poor are unheard. And there is little compassion, little exchange of gifts, little love, only the inevitableness of hunger—for bread that is not stone.

Miss Fantino and her two associates are in urgent need of funds for their work in East Harlem. Particularly, they need money to provide some time in the country for Puerto Rican children this summer. We will be happy to forward any contributions from our readers for their work. Checks should be made out to Eileen Fantino and may be addressed % The Commonweal, 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y.

THE EDITORS.

THE LESSON OF JUNE 17

Unrest Behind the Curtain

NORBERT MUHLEN

IN the last months, reports of growing unrest and of increasingly active resistance against the Communist government have come from East Germany. One of the most interesting tells of what happened on March 30 in the Baltic seaside town of Greifswald. Its five-hundred-year-old University has a school of medicine attended by seven hundred students. Last March, the Communist government decreed that as of next September, only those students could continue their studies who volunteered to serve after their graduation as doctors in the K.V.P. (*Kasernierte Volkspolizei*), as the new Communist East German army is called. In protest against the decree which would turn them all into Communist army doctors the student body of the school of medicine decided to strike. On March 30, all the classrooms and clinics of the University of Greifswald were completely empty. In the afternoon, students and professors staged a protest meeting on the campus. The Communists sent their heavily armed railway security guard battalion to the meeting to break it up, and announced a public meeting to be held in its stead that evening, with prominent Communists as speakers on the subject: "Medicine and the International Situation."

The first speaker, the Communist party district leader Karl Mewes, had hardly begun his lecture on the differences between unjust capitalist wars and just Communist wars, the latter to be enthusiastically supported by every good doctor, when the students started a riot. They drowned the speaker's voice by their shouts of "Freedom!," and took to beating-up the high Communist functionaries present. While a young student climbed to the dais, almost one thousand police troops, with carbines and machine guns ready to shoot, stormed the hall. Slightly over two hundred students were picked from the crowd, arrested, and taken to prison in fifteen trucks. Seventeen among them—quite a few carrying membership cards of the Communist youth organization—were charged with being "Fascist western agents who had instigated the riots," and now await trial.

In the first week of April, almost two hundred East German workers in Saxony were arrested because of their public protests against the increasingly severe food shortages. Several dozen farmers were tried at the same time for burning their barns in protest against the oppressive new "production standards" to which they were subjected. Slow-downs and sit-down strikes, those secret weapons of non-violence and solidarity with which oppressed rebellious workers learn to fight their "workers' democracies," occurred in quite a few places.

In East Berlin, anti-Communism's most sensitive center, the much-publicized new East German radio

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Mr. Muhlen, author of *The Return of Germany*, has covered anti-Communist resistance movements in Berlin for the past seven years.

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installations were burned by persons the Communist secret police never found; that this was a gesture of protest, no one doubted. The most reliable barometer of discontent and opposition behind the Curtain, the number of refugees arriving in free West Berlin, registered a sharp rise this spring, with close to ten thousand refugees coming now per month, an increase of almost fifty per cent over recent years.

The situation as indicated by these and very many other incidents recalls strongly the situation which prevailed before, and led up to, the great rebellion of June 17, 1953. On that day, the people of East Germany rose up against their government, called for a general strike, stormed the prisons, liberated the political prisoners, demanded the overthrow of their satellite dictatorship and clamored for free, democratic elections. The spontaneous uprising which suddenly revealed that the overwhelming majority, particularly the workers and the young, hated the Communist dictatorship, spread in a magnificent chain reaction throughout the country, and news of it encouraged workers in Czechoslovakia and in Russia itself—in the slave labor camps of Vorkuta—to strike. They were quieted only by the power of Soviet tanks.

The conditions which brought about the great uprising of two years ago seem very much like conditions that have come to prevail behind the Curtain during the past months. The first, and major, condition is rather constant—discontent with the total regimentation and frequent terror of life under Soviet control. But there is also a second, more fluctuating, factor—discontent with living conditions, frustration because of low wages, high "norms" or production standards, scarcity and the poor quality of consumer goods. Economic discontent in the summer of 1953 made people more aware of, and more bitter toward, their political masters, and more eager to act in defense of their rights. Today—after the failure of hopes for improvement that were shared even by genuine enemies of the Communists—the trend again moves in the direction of social discontent and despair. From butter and margarine to leather shoes and textiles, shortages are widespread; rationing, despite the promises of its early abolishment in 1954, still continues. The newest Communist plan seems to accept this situation as normal, and—in contrast to the short Malenkov era—purposely disregards supplies for consumers in favor of armament production. The result is that the people behind the Curtain are restive again.

A third factor which recalls the situation before June 17, 1953, is that now as then the Soviet leaders are attempting to radiate sweetness and light on the international scene. People behind the Curtain (in contrast with many people in the West) conclude from this that the Soviet leaders feel weak, insecure, beset by their own mistakes; and this again gives many people in the East hope that there is a new chance for them to stand up and fight for their own interests, and for liberation.

THE rebellion on June 17, 1953, failed in the end, but one of the reasons—in my opinion, a most momentous reason—was that the West failed the rebels.

The long list of omissions of acts by which the West could legitimately have helped the rebels culminated in its refusal to use its broadcasting and other public information facilities for an announcement of the general strike which the East German strike leaders proclaimed. Since RIAS, the American-directed West Berlin radio station, was then practically the only means of communication among the East German people, and since spokesmen of the East German people (who for years had been admonished by the same station to resist their government) implored the station to let them announce their decision, one might have taken it for granted that an announcement would have been made. But American policy-makers decided not to permit their station to announce the strike. Instead, a West German Minister exhorted the East Germans in the midst of their uprising to "keep quiet blood." In short, the people who wanted to liberate themselves were purposely deprived of the directions, and even the news, which their own leaders wanted to transmit to them. (This almost incredible instance of Western do-nothingism is told by Rainer Hildebrandt, West Berlin resistance leader, in *The Explosion*, a fascinating report on the East German uprising, soon to be published in this country.)

Not even Gandhi, with all his aversion for violence and war, could have objected to the peaceful act of communicating the call for a general strike. To suppress this call was tantamount to abetting the suppression of a people's attempt to liberate itself.

During the uprising an American general refused to permit West Berlin's Lord Mayor, the late Ernst Reuter, whose voice was generally accepted as authoritative behind the Curtain, and whose wisdom, warmth and vigor could have provided the rebels with leadership, to use one of the many military planes to fly to Berlin from Vienna. French authorities refused to allow resistance fighters to use their West Berlin golf links for sending off balloons with messages eastward; another American general refused to permit army soup kitchens and ambulances to stand on the western side of the boundary line ready to serve the rebels. All these and other omissions were part and parcel of the Western directive to ignore, if not discourage, the people in their rising for freedom.

But was it not shown on June 17 that Russian military power can and will finish off all uprisings at will? When the East German riots began, the

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Soviet troops learned from their propagandists that this was a Nazi *putsch*. In several cases, when Russian officers were able to talk with the strikers and to learn the truth about their "*putsch*," they refused to fight them and were later courtmartialed. That the West use its full facilities to acquaint all Russian troops in their native language with the real facts, and to let German workers and Soviet defectors call for fraternization between troops and people, was suggested to Western authorities, and rejected.

In the present re-evaluation of recent American policies, this chapter of June 17, 1953, deserves great attention. For it is a topical chapter. New rebellions may be in the offing in East Germany—or in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, perhaps in Russia itself. What will be our attitude the next time? As it now seems, the lessons of June 17, 1953, have not even been studied. May we assume that a recurrence would find the West as unprepared, as confused and as passive as it was two years ago?

JOY AND LONELINESS

The View from a Train

HOW many times has the train come into a little forlorn station to stop for the people whose bleak faces we see fleetingly out of our window, and then go on its way? I think the world ends in small railroad stations, at night. All hearts break there. A pale woman huddled in a shawl stands under the bare electric bulb, and looks in vain for comfort from the train. No one gets off for her. A young couple say goodbye forever in the blue and dreary station. Children—oh it is no place for children—look undernourished and tubercular and illegitimate there. Desolate. With desolation has the land been made desolate. Trains at night are desolate enough; the stations they come into are wasted and ravaged with it. It drips from the wall; it clings to the wheels; it enters through the finger tips and goes to the heart.

And we come into such a station. The woman is there and although I am saying an Easter office all decked out and triumphant with alleluias, my lips taste them like little lead balls. I am thinking of the priest who had received Newman into the Church and how he had died, alone, in a small railroad station.

Christ died alone in such a station. And the woman huddled in the shawl under the electric bulb was there.

Kierkegaard, when he cries out in his Protestant aloneness, or Sartre in his atheistic aloneness, they are drilling near the well; and let us not, please, let us not bring our false and forced togetherness to laugh at them. Bring Christ dying in the railroad station, crying God's aloneness. Has any writer, or any railroad whistle at night, or any sparrow on a roof top, or any small fire in the distance of the night pierced the human spirit with desolation and loneliness like the *Eli Eli*? Bring that. Cry out and cry yes. You have a right to be lonely o woman, o railroad station, o kierkegaard, o sartre, o sparrow, o fire, o fearful whistle of the train. You have the right.

Alleluia, said the Breviary. A lead ball, and heavy. How could this be the uniform of the day? How? Well, *Roma locutus est*. Wear whites and say the alleluia. In this world of shivering women and electric bulbs? On this train of cigarette smoke, of a man in a green sweater reading a lurid pocket book, and another with his shoes off sprawled in smelly sleep, of small talk, paper coffee cups and stale sandwiches, and too much heat pouring all over your feet? Wear whites? Blacks, rather, and trimmed in black. The world is bleak and black and desolate.

And here we are, said the conductor. Pittsburgh, with fire shouting in the sky, and smoke. Alleluia, alleluia.

O foolish and slow of heart, said the homily. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things. O Sartre and Kierkegaard, foolish and slow of heart. Train whistle, lonely railroad station, o my own heart, foolish and slow. Ought not the woman huddle in the shawl? Ought not Christ cry *Eli Eli* in trains and train stations until the end of time?

The thing that brought the loneliness has undergone redemption, but the loneliness is left, and the pain of it. This is the water through which we slush, the desert and the storm; the fire through which we leap, the ditches and the cliff; the thirst in the throat, and the agony. Ought not we pass through? And so enter into the end of loneliness and the end of pain and slush and dust and soaking rain, the end of fire and pits and mountain flanks. The end of thirst.

O Christ, said the book, for you we watch at break of day. And they knew Him in the breaking of the bread. After the breaking of the heart, they found Him in the breaking of the bread. And that apparently is the only way you can find Him. In the broken heart, the broken bread.

Help me, O Lord, says the priest just before Mass, to carry the tears and sorrow that I may find the joy. Help me through the loneliness of all railroad stations and night trains where I hear the *Eli Eli* dripping down the walls and crying in my heart, and every heart, and hungering and thirsting, and shivering under a shawl, and crying for release, and crying for You. Help me.

THOMAS P. HEATH, O.P.

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IF YOU WERE THEY

HOW hard it is to accept people while still rejecting their ideas! And yet, I suppose that is a central duty of Christian charity and the essence of social tolerance. I have been thinking of these things recently because of a certain number of letters sent in to this column. The letters were written in disagreement. I was glad to get them. A man who sets his opinions down on paper every week should expect others to disagree. But one thing struck me in several letters. Some ulterior motive was implied in each case. A liberal lady who thought I was too easy on the McCarthyites suggested that I was trying to win favor and maybe a job with the Luce organization. That explained why I wrote as I did. A man in the opposite corner suggested that I might be looking for a nod of approval from the editors of the *Nation* and the *New Republic*. Another reader implied that I was trying to improve my standing with the National Committee of the Democratic Party.

Now none of these implications is horrendous. I was somewhat amused and not very deeply hurt by the suggestions, though none of them even occurred to me when I wrote the column which elicited such responses. The letters started me thinking of this inability of almost all of us to avoid imputing motives to those who disagree with us.

We all fail here, and this writer is no exception. Take this page, therefore, as a kind of public examination of conscience.

"Judge not lest you be judged." Clearly, we were not told to refrain from making judgments, from choosing truth over error or good over evil. The Biblical admonition is not a *placet* for the man who never takes a stand and everlastingly asks: "What is Truth?" I take it that what we are warned against is something quite different. We are warned against imputing dark, evil motives to those who disagree with us, when a mistaken or confused motivation could just as easily be applied, and probably with more exactness. We are warned against thinking the worst about other people when we could just as easily think the best. We are warned against judging human beings by the evil they do, as if that were the most characteristic of their acts, and casting a cold eye on the good in them.

I take it that we are warned against rejecting the pure-malice explanation for the error we find in others. In a word, we are warned against the simplicism that would explain a man on terms less complicated than man's own nature. We are forbidden to play God, reading the hearts of others. We scarcely understand ourselves and our own muddled malice; it behooves us then not to sit in judgment.

Surely that does not mean that we are forbidden to disagree, and to disagree vigorously. We are certainly not forbidden to fight for the right as we understand it or to stand up for the truth we believe in. But it does seem to mean that we can not treat the truth as if we had personally invented it and were free to wear it like a halo. We are forbidden to look on those in error as if they were creatures of the Devil. Still we are all more or less inclined to do just that. We seem unable to believe in the sincerity of those who disagree with us, or to explain their temerity in taking issue with us, by any but malicious or ulterior motives. Most of us are forever looking for the other guy's "angle."

The "ulterior-motive" or pure-malice explanation seems to have its grip on all of us. Whether, in a political context, it be the McCarthyite judging the liberal or the liberal judging the McCarthyite, only the Devil-theory seems to satisfy. Catholics speak with horror of birth-controllers and it is not at all uncommon for Mrs. Sanger to be treated as if she were deliberately setting out to corrupt youth. The Communists' favorite dismissal of their opponents is with the word "animal." The anti-racists speak of the racists as "filthy," and the racists can explain their opponents only on the grounds that somebody must be paying them off. The partisan press reeks with hate and venom, and the more ideological the group, generally speaking, the more receptive it is to rumor and scandal about its opponents.

We hear a great deal about anti-intellectualism. This tendency to turn so violently against the *person* (not merely the idea or the philosophy) of those who disagree with us, is probably the acme of anti-intellectualism. It amounts to a refusal to deal with ideas as such and a failure to value the person above his error.

We have even talked sometimes as if the righteousness of our cause is proved only when we are convinced that our opponent is subhuman. This has led to absurdity. If the Japanese actually were all we said they were, during the war, our anti-racist position would have been meaningless.

Who hasn't heard a young child before a television screen ask, "Which ones are the bad guys?" As he grows older he will learn that they are the ones who snarl and skulk, wear unpressed suits, and need a shave.

How, then, *do* we judge others, for we can not avoid it? There is the Golden Rule. But maybe even the Golden Rule calls for some elaboration. A priest friend of mine once pointed out that I can hurt someone else with a remark that would not offend me in the slightest. An adult who treats an adolescent the way he, as an adult, might be willing to be treated could possibly do a great deal of mischief. The insensitive can not presume that others are equally obtuse. The priest suggested an additional phrase for the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you, *if you were they*." That takes some doing.

JOHN COGLEY.

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THE STAGE

OUR AMERICAN COUSIN

"INHERIT the Wind," the fictional gloss which the Messrs. Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee have imposed on the celebrated 'monkey trial' of the American twenties, is that fabled beast of contemporary mythology, the liberal melodrama, frothing here with indignation and ruffled with the frowsy anxieties of academic freedom. I am aware that this harshness of judgment is decidedly a minority opinion—the play is enjoying great favor—yet it is a dissident belief to which I hold tenaciously. Conceding to the playwrights even the melancholy virtue of 'good' (though mindless) intentions, it is difficult to believe that either the state of society or of theatrical art is well served by the kind of obvious intellectual prevarication which has taken root on West 41st Street.

One may deal firmly and coldly with the dramatic pretension of "Inherit the Wind": its quantity of felt or observed life is mean and penurious. There is an assiduous proliferation of surface detail, but in the tone and texture of the piece an ingrained functional dreariness, a decisive absence of individual personality. The flavor, indeed, is rather what I conceive to have been that of the social realist literature of the thirties; had Clara Weatherwax written for the stage, she might well have done thus and so. Nor have the playwrights overcome that disabling flaw of all fictional reconstructions of the past: the presence of the immutable world of fact. The intimidating shadow of history blurs every gesture of "Inherit the Wind": it is never transcended, yet it cannot be ignored. We pass, thus, in a continuous uneasy traffic between the worlds of fact and imagination—both bodiless, both unreal—without ever arriving at the destination of truth.

Yet it is rather with the play in its guise of liberal melodrama that I am concerned. The nature of the liberal melodrama is to permit us the luxuries of indignation, of the unearned response; it is preoccupied with many things, but a passionate devotion to truth is not notably among them. Its impulse—ostensibly so liberating and generous—would in actuality impose the conformity of a facile and indiscriminate democratic harmony. Yet with these strategies, "Inherit the Wind" ringingly establishes the brief for freedom of mind: ironically too, for it is a play from which the quality of *mind* itself is almost totally absent. It records the conflict not of ideas but of what Lionel Trilling has called 'irritable mental gestures'—here the skirmish of a vulgar and specious rationality with a vulgar and specious religiosity. In its deeper reaches, it exposes (as do so many moral and political crises of American life) the conflict not of ideas but of sentiments. Now ideas, being spirit—pure, august and terrible—are far less seductive than sentiment, and with this awareness in mind, we may better grasp the nature of the curious psychological situation re-enacted nightly at the National: the ugly spectacle of an audience reproducing emotions which, *in the play,* are being subjected to judgment and condemnation. We are told by tradition that the unexamined life is not worth living: the success of "Inherit the Wind" would seem rather to indicate the melancholy truth that, on the contrary, unexamined sentiments are very much worth the having.

Mr. Herman Shumlin's production of the play has a certain theatrical interest, though this has been too much praised: his direction is in that ponderous and weighty vein which is somehow considered appropriate for "intellectual" drama. The ingenious double set by Peter Larkin is good American gothic, yet like the play vacillates between imagination and prosaic reality. In the main, the playing substitutes energy for delicacy of finish; paradoxically, the one subtle performance—Ed Begley's portrait of the fundamentalist — lacks that florid boldness of line which so distinguishes this indigenous national figure. A garish caricature of Mencken is well sustained by Tony Randall, with his sure gift for high comedy. Paul Muni holds the piece in unity with his rich, plummy recreation of the pungent rationalist, Darrow. I would call this performance a masterpiece of theatrical engineering: constructed wholly from the outside, shamelessly exhibitionistic, full of calculated whims and tics and gaucheries. It is synthetic as distinguished from creative acting, and its imaginative penetration is slight. Yet undeniably, the result has presence, the vivid charm of the actual: there is about it a massive common reality which cannot be ignored, and which solidly anchors our attention among the dusty winds of liberal dogma blowing hotly from the stage. (*At the National.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

"TEN CENTS A DANCE"

I'M not sure that Producer Joe Pasternak and Director Charles Vidor realized what a bittersweet musical they were making in "Love Me or Leave Me." But in any case they certainly have come up with something unusual. In telling the story of Ruth Etting, an overambitious singer of the 1920s who allowed a Chicago racketeer to push her career until she hit the big time and then married him out of gratitude, not love, the film makers were handling

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a hot potato. Following a script that softens the real story a mite, Doris Day plays the glamorous Miss Etting with glamor and with a singing style that catches well the manner of the famed radio-and-night club entertainer who put over such tunes as "You Made Me Love You," "Mean to Me," "Love Me or Leave Me" and "Ten Cents a Dance." But it is James Cagney, who portrays "The Gimp" the egocentric racketeer with a limp, who gives this picture its bitter realism. Unfortunately for a musical, Cagney's superb performance takes over and dominates the whole tone of the film. As he's done before, he makes the gangster type so real, so hateful—but so understandable—that "Love Me or Leave Me" almost becomes his story, the story of a frustrated man as determined to have this girl as she is determined to have success. Both get what they're after, but the getting turns out to be pretty sour.

Credit for the wallop packed by this extraordinary musical should go of course to many people: Pasternak and Vidor, scriptwriters Daniel Fuchs and Isobel Lennart, the many songwriters whose words and music are typical of the story and the period, the film's designers who have caught in CinemaScope and Eastman Color the feel and the spirit of the Prohibition Era with costumes and sets—and naturally to the good cast. As the subject of a musical movie, however, the friction between the ambitious singer and her obnoxious husband leaves much to be desired. You can hardly warm up to this girl who used marriage as a payment for assistance along the way, and after having married this man who never ceased loving her used divorce to get rid of him.

THE husband in "Soldier of Fortune" gets kind of a shaky deal too. Susan Hayward goes all the way to Hong Kong to look for her missing spouse (Gene Barry) and after finding him with the help of Clark Gable, she exchanges Gene for the more dashing Clark. Actually "Soldier of Fortune" is an adventure film with handsome shots in CinemaScope and De Luxe Color of Hong Kong and China. Ernest K. Gann, who wrote the script from his own novel, doesn't mean for us to take the story too seriously; and Director Edward Dmytryk is mainly concerned with two-fisted action, foreign intrigue and exotic locale. Depth of character is quite secondary to what's going on, although the three principals as well as Michael Rennie, as a British inspector keeping law and order in Hong Kong, Alex D'Arcy, Tom Tully, Anna Sten, Russell Collins and many others in this very large cast get in there and pitch hard to keep the excitement going without our having to think about such details as to what kind of a person is this Susan who would chase around the globe looking for a husband she'd toss aside so casually. All the Chinese Communists, though not called such in the picture, are villains; and everyone else, especially the indomitable Mr. Gable, has a heart of gold under a very tough exterior.

IF you can call college boys adults, "Five Against the House" is about adult delinquency. But these college boys (played by Guy Madison, Brian Keith, Alvy Moore and Kerwin Mathews all of whom have definitely reached the adult age) act like juveniles; and when they and Guy's fiancee (Kim Novak) stick up a night club at Reno, Nevada, you wonder a little bit as to what our college kids are coming to. Don't wonder too much though. Guy and Kim are dragged into the deal by Guy's psychotic war-time buddy, and the other two boys never act their age anyway. "Five Against the House" is the kind of a movie that wants to eat its cake and have it too. Phil Karlson's fast-paced direction lets you have it, but the thoughtless script is for the birds. Let them eat cake.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"ITALIAN MOVIE CODE"

Los Angeles, Calif.

TO the Editors: So I'm "devoted to movie censorship" [May 20]! That's funny. It's also false. Of course, you didn't bother making distinctions. You know me well enough to make sweeping statements about me. Yet you conveniently forget that ever since I became a Catholic fifteen years ago I have consistently advocated editorial self-control by responsible film industries (e.g. Hollywood Movie Code) as preferable to censorship.

Take a good look at the Italian movie industry. Which would you prefer: a government film code based on "Fatherland, Religion and Home," or a continuance of the present situation in which the Italian movie industry, heavily infiltrated by Communists and pro-Communists, turns out so many films slighting or ignoring Italy's tradition of Catholic culture? And why did you ignore the example I gave, "Stranger on the Prowl," which was partly financed by the Italian government and produced by American Reds fired by Hollywood? Which future for Italy are you devoted to?

Your curt allegation that I "detected anti-American, anti-Christian diatribe" in "On the Waterfront" was another sweeping statement. My main argument was that "it serves Communism when our social sores are so aired as to fester, not heal them." Should this draw sneers from a truly Catholic publication?

On a previous occasion, by nameless identification,

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you found me "immoral" as a critic and guilty by association with a man from Wisconsin. In the same context, you protested my qualified appraisal of McCarey's "My Son John" because you detected in it the abhorrent theme of "guilt by association!" You commit against me the very offenses of bias and distortion of which, without respect for complete evidence, you accuse me.

WILLIAM H. MOORING,
Movie and TV Editor,
The Tidings.

Los Angeles, Calif.

TO the Editors: In regard to your editorial concerning Mr. William H. Mooring [May 20], I feel that a most unfair impression was created. I doubt if Mr. Mooring is as devoted to censorship as you claim. If he generally aligns himself with the censor, it is because the censor is generally concerned with the preservation of traditional mores and morality. It does not follow, of course, that censorship is always right or even desirable, and Mr. Mooring has been highly critical of irresponsible censorship. Recently, when pressure tactics were employed against Bryan Foy (a Hollywood producer of undistinguished films), it was Bill Mooring who set the record straight by revealing how the would-be censors erred.

Your editorial states that ". . . Mr. Mooring has always been quick to detect anti-American, anti-Christian diatribe in practically any film which questions the status quo." "On the Waterfront" was cited as an example. It is true that his initial review of that film contained errors of fact, and when Rev. John M. Corridan, S.J., of the Xavier Institute of Labor Relations in New York, called them to his attention, Mr. Mooring was quick to admit (and in print) his error. Father Corridan also said that the real picture of waterfront corruption was even darker than that depicted on the screen, to which Mr. Mooring commented ". . . if there are any pressures that would keep off the movie screen the truth about waterfront corruption, then they ought to be exposed and resisted." He also wrote that he wished to ". . . correct any impression my previous comment may have conveyed that I think the screen should not be used to expose abuses within our social and industrial system." Is this devotion to the status quo?

Personally, I am no fonder of the proposed Italian governmental censorship than you. Mr. Mooring favors it, and his reasons are worthy of thoughtful consideration if not agreement. The Italian government subsidizes films in Italy, and it is usually the irresistible temptation of him who pays the piper to call the tune. You may argue that this is morally reprehensible, but dem's de conditions what prevail. Logically, it would be better to argue against subsidy.

To disagree with opinion is one thing; to castigate the person who holds it is another. Mr. Mooring is an honest, thoroughly conscientious commentator on the motion picture scene. His point of view is sometimes open to question (as is your own), but this should in no way lessen our respect for his honesty nor reduce our debt for his courage.

SAMUEL JAMES LARSEN.

"BELIEF AND THE WRITER"

North Easton, Mass.

TO the Editors: In a recent article, Mr. Martin Turnell has thrown much light on the problem of "Belief and the Writer." His stand between anti- and pro-dogmatists seems well taken: that there is truth and error in both camps.

The problem resolves itself into the relation between objective truth and art, between truth and beauty: how will an artist's conceptions of reality influence the validity of his art? It seems surprising that Mr. Turnell made little or no identifiable use of Jacques Maritain's *Art and Scholasticism* or *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* in so fundamental a discussion.

Perhaps, for example, Mr. Turnell's "delicate balance" between the man who believes and the man who writes, might have profited by still greater clarity from Maritain's tracing of creative intuition to the roots of personality and intellectual self. For it happens that as a man is, so he perceives, so he writes. If then a man writes out of himself sincerely, and that self of his has the power and habit of any truth whatever, the truth will of necessity manifest itself for better or worse in his writing; he will write nothing without the stamp of his personality: his own unique perception of and reaction to reality. The rest of the discussion would continue from here, as it does admirably in Mr. Turnell's analysis.

However, the last page of Mr. Turnell's article was for me more provocative even than the rest; except that here, for once, there seems to be a need for some disagreement. It concerns the influence of our modern age, and the charity of Eliot, Greene and Mauriac that I would like to suggest an evaluation different from Mr. Turnell's.

Our age is irreligious, empty, materialistic. But its glory is that it has made us unhappy. It has made us restless, lonely, selfish, merely busy—all those things that come from or contribute to secularism, materialism, individualism, superficial Christianity. We are a hateful race, to begin with. For this there is an honored Christian prayer: "O Lord, I am nothing, I have nothing, I can do nothing but sin, being a child of wrath by nature . . .". Greene, Mauriac, and others have re-taught us this truth. They echo, it seems to me,

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the cry of emptiness and mediocrity and superficiality that is our curse—and blessing—in this age.

I do not see how they fail in Christianity here. Rather, it seems that we other Christians are guilty in finding it so much easier to enjoy the security of Jane Austen, a security held over from an age conscious of a God-given existence, a security and an age that no longer exist. We tend to think of ourselves as Christians, as redeemed, as already good. Romano Guardini, I think, has put the truth of the matter more exactly: We ought not yet to call ourselves Christians (for that is so enormously good and difficult a thing), but only those who are trying to become Christian.

It seems to me that it is this sense of man's nothingness and selfishness (and therefore hatefulness) that Greene, Eliot and Mauriac are faithful to. Further, it is their understanding of the love and mercy of Christianity that somehow, torturously, yet I think validly, saves their work, as it saves humanity. Here I think is their love for man: that they recognize his nothingness when he is apart from God, and yet they in the end can only marvel and rejoice in God's love —even for the most mediocre, hateful and egostistical of men.

Thus it seems to me that the "kindly tolerant attitude" of Chaucer is the measure both of a success and of a failure. His success is his love of human beings as they are, a virtue much to be desired in a writer and a man. But his sometimes ambiguous "tolerance" I fear occasionally approaches nearer to complicity—as feared the author of the *Retractions* —than any of the hatefulness with which Mauriac, Greene and Eliot describe, and thereby castigate, our modern mediocrity.

Finally, if the third figure that Mr. Turnell finds in literary history (to complement the pilgrim and the explorer) is the silhouette struck from the works of modern Christian artists, perhaps that is because this third figure is indeed the modern world's contribution to the understanding of man. Through our own power and knowledge (perhaps the working out of the desire to know good and evil as God does) we are coming in our age perhaps closer to the ultimate than any previous age of history. We can annihilate the race. The unity, the immensity, of the universe is overwhelmingly more impressive to post-Copernicans, to post-Einsteinians. The foundations of reason have been denied, contradicted, and new systems begun who knows how many times. We have come to a new understanding of the impotence, the confusion, the blindness of man in the face of our own inability to agree universally on anything.

The world is no longer a tidily mapped countryside of pilgrimage. For those outside the Church it is indeed a vast, chaotic, torturing world of exploration—often with a "goal that changes places". A Catholic who has experienced their confusion—even if only in his inability to make his own stand clear to them— cannot but write with his concept of mystery and darkness, of sin, of utter limitation, drastically affected. He cannot write, secure and stable in the consciousness of a God-given universe, until that consciousness is indeed prevalent in his culture—as it is not, I believe, in the modern pagan world, nor weakly Christian one.

Meanwhile, though he himself enjoy and rejoice in the seeking of God, he still feels no security or stability: neither for the sake of his millions of fellow men who don't know God, nor on his own part, who is so modernly conscious of the unreasoned drives within him, of the easy errors of the mind, of the "choking gas of mediocrity" and egotism that so silently and continually steals about him—all of which make up for him a world of reality demanding far more courage and perspicacity than the too easily labelled allegorical worlds of Dante and Bunyan.

How well he can write out of the pain and questioning of our modern world, and yet write out of a wholly authentic Catholic vision of that world, will be the test of his art, and of the breadth of his conceptions as well. For success in neither expression nor vision necessarily implies success in the other. Failure in either will mean failure as a "believing writer" (whether hypothetical-–observationalist, panthiest, Catholic, or other).

Our Greenes and Mauriacs and Eliots may not have the "genius squared" that Maritain would demand of the perfect Catholic writer. Perhaps they are too little perfect artists and too little perfect Catholics. While they are imperfect, then, they need the acute criticism of men like Mr. Turnell. Their achievement as artists is not dismissed because marred by certain imperfections. Their achievement as Christian artists ought not, either, to be overlooked in the enforcing upon them of a requirement to write as if out of a different vision than the present world gives them of the meaning of Christ and man's need of the love and mercy of God.

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The Bravery and Insight of Georges Bernanos

THE LAST ESSAYS OF GEORGES BERNANOS. Translated by Joan and Barry Ulanov. Regnery. $4.50.

By GEORGE N. SHUSTER

THE addresses which have been loyally assembled in this book show that until the end of his days Georges Bernanos was, despite the vehemence of his pamphleteering moods (he had always been, as a revered colleague said, *un homme féroce*), almost child-like in the generosity and tenderness of his spirit. They are not essays at all, but speeches delivered quite impromptu at the close of the War when their author, returning from self-imposed exile, had perforce to concern himself with the abasement of France and the dominance of civilizations which seemingly found their aptest symbols in the "machine," in the fleets of tanks and planes that had torn into one another in quest of victory. Would the feverish confidence in mechanized production of goods which was preached by the Russians in particular bring happiness to mankind? And what, assuming that people would go all out for this confidence, might be the duty and the opportunity of France?

Bernanos was always one to bare his soul to the skin. And so there are times when he looks delightfully ridiculous, or old-fashioned, or like a bilious beadle. He says that he is not opposed to machines as such, but obviously every glimpse he caught of factories and the behemoths they were turning out filled him with consternation and disgust. Like every writer who lives by his manuscripts, he detests the income tax collector, gumshoe symbol of the modern state. He retains the ancient anti-bourgeois delight in taunting those elected to the French Academy. A French Catholic entering politics draws his fire on principle. And though he was always ready to go down on his knees in the mud before a priest who was also a saint, he kept right on boyishly throwing stones at clerics who were not, so far as one could see, uncomfortable or particularly mystical. Yet he was himself knee deep in a kind of politics; he knew perfectly well that he happened not to be singularly holy, and he remained almost as found of fame as Petrarch.

Yet these quite human things are endearing because of the extraordinary insight into the nature of good and evil which were his because of a confluence of genius and grace. Therefore his conception of France was without chauvinism or rancor. He reproved the havoc that was wrought in Germany, for example, while looking with horror at what seemed to have been bred in that country for mankind through the marriage of Hegel, Marx and Hitler. France was for him the eldest daughter of the Church who, though she had succumbed to harlotry upon occasion, was become through suffering and abasement a woman cleansed and free, holding in her hands once more the heritage of freedom.

It is useless to argue about these views: they will be felt or emotionally rejected, but there is something about them which haunts the mind. Perhaps one can term it the lingering sweetness of ancient tree-bordered roads down which it was good to go because they led to the mountains and the sea. That is, to eternal things in the presence of which man, however humbled, drew the breath of his individuality deeply because they guaranteed that he was to remain forever and always.

What are freedom and individuality? Bernanos says these are words describing man's ability to make his soul come to life—that hidden realm of being which so many of us know nothing about but which when realized is found to be filled with the riches and the light of goodness, God's Goodness, which transforms the mystery of suffering into the still greater mystery of received affection. This he talks about in words so resplendent with poetry and insight that they quite take one's breath away. You will find them particularly in the address entitled "Our Friends the Saints," delivered to an audience of Carmelites in Algiers during 1947. "The scandal of the universe," he declared, "is not suffering but freedom." It is this, given to man for the sake of adventure and discovery, which he often uses, alas, to exchange them for routine. And so Bernanos adds: "Won't Damnation be the tardy discovery, the discovery much too late, after death, of a soul absolutely unused, still carefully folded together, and spoiled, the way certain precious silks are spoiled when they are not used?"

But toward the tilling of the fair land of the soul modern civilization has not been tending: and in Bernanos' view this failure results from the growing conviction that technology can provide all mankind needs—leisure, for example, from which, he says, work will eventually provide a welcome escape. His argument is primarily concerned, however, with the threat to freedom which in his judgment is inseparable from the "machine." The reader will be reminded of Belloc's *Servile State,* though there is a new ominousness in the fact that the atomic bomb is also in Bernanos' thinking a machine—perhaps the ultimate one. How can freedom be maintained unless men desire it? And the answer in not a few parts of the world is that the yearning is by no means a deep or vigorous one.

It is this awareness of waning spiritual energy that grips the reader of these pages, rather than any pertinence in sociological terms. Mankind cannot undo the "machine," nor can it forget that nuclear fission is a grim reality. But the awesome rightness of what Bernanos says is not impaired thereby. Unless it is possible to redress the human balance, the world will inevitably become more and more inhuman. This was the great message of a noble and remarkable writer whose bravery and uncanny insight into the spiritual realities of his time will never be forgotten.

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A Voice of America

PRAIRIE-TOWN BOY. By Carl Sandburg. Harcourt, Brace. $2.75.

By SEYMOUR KRIM

UNFORTUNATELY for good writing we live in a time where a variety of appetites buries quality beneath transitory minute-thrills, and writers like Mr. Sandburg have to catch their public over TV rather than between book covers. Nevertheless, good books, like good people, recreate an example whether the audience is large or small. And Carl Sandburg in the silverlight of a long and honorable literary career has given a solid lesson to young literary dudes who have written him off, while he has provided in the pages of *Prairie-Town Boy* some of the cleanest and most authoritative American prose that this reviewer has run into in a very long time.

Good writers, Ezra Pound once wrote, are those who keep the language clear and accurate quite apart from partisanship in a particular cause or philosophy. "It doesn't matter whether the good writer wants to be useful or whether the bad writer wants to do harm," he went on: what counts is whether they use words with an adult recognition of their value, for to play loosely with them is not only personal irresponsibility but infects society as well. Should inflation or devaluation of language set in we, the readers, are being victimized by falsification, says Pound, and the warning should sound for all who consider what men write as significant as what they say and do. (In the light of Pound's comment, one can easily see why the mass abuse of language and values in the interests of opportunism has produced an "age of critics": the warning is sounding daily for the conscience, and the yea-saying poet is shaped by his environment into the frustrating role of nay-saying critic.)

Mr. Sandburg fits Pound's prescription for the moral health of language as if he were the original doctor, so definitely does he use words, and yet with such seeming off-handedness that a casual eye—a *Daily News* reader, say—would go right along for the fun without reflecting on what made the experience so real. But feel it he would, just like the more sophisticated reader, because it contains the quality of authentic life on practically every page.

Prairie-Town Boy is excerpted out of *Always the Young Strangers*, a longer autobiographical work published three years ago; this appetizer is guarantee to whet the appetite for the longer book. Sandburg's subject-matter is almost childishly simple: what it was like to grow up in Galesburg, Illinois in the 1880s and '90s, and be a young Swede (at first self-conscious about it, too) amidst the German, Irish, Italian and Yankee families who had built a little American melting-pot in the middle of the prairie. We get from the author pictures of his parents, brothers and sisters that have the clean, unapologetic accuracy of a Flemish still-life, and speak for themselves because of the exactly factual way in which they are presented. This method of letting the facts speak unadorned—perhaps appreciated, and absorbed, by Sandburg while coping with the mass of Lincoln anecdotes—directs the reader's attention to the person, place or thing, not to the author's style or editorial comment (of which there is practically none). To reveal the uncommoness of the commonplace Sandburg must use a language which is as precise and clear as *what* he sees in daily life, with not an ounce of verbal murk to obscure the glisten of fact. In this sense he is still an Imagist, perfectly illustrating T. E. Hulme's declaration of Imagist ideals in 1912:

> A man cannot write without seeing at the same time a visual signification before his eyes. It is this image which precedes the writing and makes it firm. Solid sentences—where the author doesn't talk, but sees solid, definite things and describes them. . . There should be direct treatment of the "thing" whether subjective or objective. One should use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation. There should be clarity of outline as in a blueprint.

The result in Sandburg's tested writing hand is a lean, hard prose that is so whittled to the point that it drives home everything it intends, and yet remains quite boyishly fresh and engaging in spite of its obvious mastery. Mr. Sandburg knows a great deal more about writing than you would be led to believe in some post-Eliotish quarters, and for anyone who wants to study a genuine artist up close this book provides an excellent opportunity.

You will see that the artist, with the assurance and self-knowledge that the years have given him, returns to the earliest scenes of his memory because they left the impressions that shaped all the rest. Only now he can see them with the clarity and control of distance, meting out right proportion to his subject-matter and so fusing the idea in the shape that you are forced to perceive the one in the other. All the skill, and the reduction of personal vanity to its true worth, that the lash of time has hardened and made certain in the artist is now brought to his last, most intimate subject. Long gone is the posturing, the philosophizing, the attitudinizing, the endless experimentation. Here at last is the artist himself, aiming to do perfect justice to his material on the scale that experience has proved is his natural one.

The scale is not grand, the artist's eye being keener than his reach is broad. He is also limited by his fidelity to the subject-matter to simple colors and shapes that repeat each other and can become monotonous if he isn't careful. The subject-matter also imposes a modesty on his vision, because to represent it exactly he must confine his penetrating eye to its dimensions—town street, corn field, the circus that came to Galesburg. He is finally limited in every way to the comparative simplicity of his

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environment, whose son and preserver he now knows he is, by necessity, which dispels illusion. But he is more than willing now to work within his own limitations because he knows that this is the only possible way to be completely convincing and to approach perfection. Thus he begins his labor of love, his nimble skill and unfazed buoyancy concealing the groan of toil and replacing it with a pace and merriment that have taken years of craftsmanship to work out.

In Sandburg's *Prairie-Town Boy* we have the finished miniature of one of our artists whose work will endure, I believe, despite the more complex point of view that has presently overlooked him. Not all of the work, no doubt, and perhaps only a small part—as small and classical as his ultimate vision—but it is "all there" at his best. The execution is absolutely equal to the conception and the result is justice and small-scale beauty. And there is also the happiness that one must always feel in the presence of such things.

The Poet as Critic

PREDILECTIONS: Literary Essays. By Marianne Moore. Viking. $3.50.

By NED O'GORMAN

MARIANNE Moore is a poet of the vision accomplished, of the image revealed and of music imparted to language. Her world of objects and their life, of feeling and its arithmetic is a glory of American poetry. If a poet's mission is to explain the world and the action at its center then Miss Moore is a triumphant missionary. When poetry has abstracted art from things and transformed the world into various descriptions of force and deception she has stayed true to the incomparable singular.

This collection of essays, Miss Moore's "predilections," is a venture into the "language of sensibility of which words can be the portrait—a magnetism, an ardor, a refusal to be false." Her great power in her poetry and in these essays is her understanding of her subjects. Her subjects are language and the poet. One feels that she knows what is being said and what is not being said; that she sees the images and feels the music; that she searches the wilderness of a poem (or novelist or dancer) and is never lost by too much understanding or too little patience.

"We must have the courage of our peculiarities," Miss Moore says, and like all great artists she teaches: "The three foremost aids to persuasion are humility, concentration and gusto. Humility . . . . is armor . . . . originality is . . . . a by-product of sincerity." "Nothing can be more stultifying than needlessly overaccented pauses." Her essay on Henry James is as nice a proof of an idea you could hope to find. It is really no more than Henry James speaking, with Marianne Moore giving the links, the little pushes, the explanations.

On Wallace Stevens, another poet like Miss Moore who has driven

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language into grandeur, she speaks with quick sharpness. Mr. Stevens is: "America's chief conjurer," the "delicate apothecary of savors and precipitates," the "ogre, traveler, comedian, an old woman, the one artist whom professionalism will never demolish." His language is "frugally unified opulence," looming out like "half a cantaloupe," giving "the body of the theme the air of a fabled argosy advancing."

If Miss Moore is, as Wallace Fowlie says, the predestined translator of La Fontaine, she is also the predestined reader of Ezra Pound. I can think of no one who could make those stupendous Cantos of Pound's as full of light, as Miss Moore could if she devoted an extended work to them. Speaking of Pound's obscurity she says: "Those who object to the Canto's obscurity—who prefer the earlier poems —are like victims of Calvin who have not read him. It may be true that the author's revisions make it harder not easier for hurried readers; but flame kindles to the eye that contemplates it."

Criticism must tend toward explication with the care and control that poetry tends toward the texture of mystery. A poem "studied" with the instruments of the poet runs the risk of appearing a painted lily. Miss Moore uses the language of poetry with the mind of a critic. A critic must never attempt to discover the hidden with a hidden rhetoric. While the language of poetry is polyhedron, the language of criticism must be unilateral.

In her excellent essay on Anna Pavlova Miss Moore, writing of Pavlova's wonderful way of moving with one grand motion, says: "Everything moves together, like a fish leaping a weir; the tiny butterfly wings seen in silhouette, weighting the space above the level skirt that in soaring out repeats the airy horizontal of the arms." One has no argument with this simply because one "understands" what the prose is "about", what the watcher (or in the case of the poet, the reader) has seen. Marianne Moore never errs by being too precise.

The illusion studied (in Paul Valéry's words), the symmetry of the world penetrated, and the undeceived ear are the signs by which we know that Marianne Moore is a critic of invaluable wisdom.

Adultery

THE MONOGAMIST. By Thomas Gallagher. Random House. $3.50.

By FRANK GETLEIN

THE modes of literary adultery are many, ranging from the brief encounter (frequently on a transcontinental train and usually the occasion for startling self-illuminations on the part of the chief adulterer—or, as is more the rule, adultress) to the prolonged affair, in which are revealed the personal development effects of adultery as well as its impact on the society in which the chief actors find themselves. By and large, the spiritual modesty of the literateurs of adultery is such that they go far beyond the injunction against cast-

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"Happily, the word 'liberal' is still used in the old-fashioned sense, not so much to describe the concrete positions one takes as to designate one's spirit and method of approach. The use of reason in controversy rather than belligerence, the absence of the chip-on-the-shoulder, the unwillingness to use the truth as if it were one's private possession, the rejection of the sectarian spirit and willingness to deal with others not as if the truths they have were of a different kind from ours or their errors were inevitably born of malevolence—this general approach is often described, in a catch-all word, as 'liberal.' This approach actually represents The Commonweal's ideal."

(The Commonweal—February 5, 1954)

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ing the first stone. Like many of Dr. Kinsey's unacknowledged disciples they conclude that there's a lot to be said for adultery but the world isn't ready for it yet.

Passing over the social and spiritual aspects of adultery and concentrating on the vulgarly sexual, the suspicion of adolescent sexuality must attach itself to the novelist of adultery. This is so because, if one is to believe those very novelists, sex is a vitally important area of human life, having profound effects on individuals, families, whole societies. Anything that important does not work to best advantage in the necessarily confined area of time and space and general circumstances imposed by most adulterous affairs. On the contrary, sex not only works in mysterious ways its wonders to perform, it works in marital ways. Only in the day-by-day, night-by-night, long-haul relationship, without the pressure of social disapproval and the consequent necessity of hide-and-seek, with children as the natural result of love expressed sexually, only there can sex begin to reveal its riches.

Adultery is the dazzle on the surface without the transforming depths of sex. It is the dazzle that beckons the adolescent to the peep-show and the town tart. In life the surface dazzle is sex sold short, and in literature when the novelist of adultery begins to assure us of the profound significance of the single, clandestine sexual act, we are entitled to suspect that he doesn't really know much about his subject.

The initial suspicion is always justified; the novelist is always free to prove it ungrounded. Many have done so. In *The Monogamist* Thomas Gallagher does not.

On the other hand, he does exhibit a nicely democratic feeling in choosing an adulterer from a social group pretty much ignored in most of the literature of the field. John Wisher is an Irish Catholic small businessman, successful enough at fifty-two, but inarticulate, growing mutely apart from his wife. In many novels of adultery this figure appears as the cuckold and occa-

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sionally as the repulsive party fondler, but he is exceedingly rare as the sympathetically seen adulterer. The reasons for this rarity are clear in *The Monogamist*. The man is a lump. Mr. Gallagher tries conscientiously to endow his hero with all the emerging delicacies of feeling enjoyed by the ladies of the upper East Side in all the other novels, but Wisher stubbornly remains a West Side garageman.

The girl in the story is totally unmotivated; she's not even a nymphomaniac, shes' just there. The two names, with their morality-level symbolism,—he is Wisher, she is Cost—indicate the pedestrian pace of the whole operation. There isn't a passage of dialogue that rings true nor one of narration that runs smooth.

The Statesman

DANIEL WEBSTER AND THE RISE OF NATIONAL CONSERVATISM. By Richard N. Current. Little, Brown. $3.

By JOHN COURNOS

IN this, the latest addition to "The Library of American Biography," edited by Oscar Handlin, Mr. Current does something of a debunking job while at the same time emphasizing what he deems Daniel Webster's real significance, in a specific sense, for our own time.

In 1900 when the first balloting took place on candidates for New York University's new Hall of Fame the electors ranked Washington at the top with ninety-seven votes, while Webster tied Lincoln for second place with ninety-six. Yet, the author maintains here, though historians and biographers continue to write about Webster as much as they did before 1900, this generation knows him not.

Moreover, Mr. Current asserts with some emphasis, even politicians in our time, who might draw upon Webster to advantage, have consistently failed to do so. As a typical example he mentions specifically the Robert A. Taft of 1952 who, "though he had less eloquence and more integrity, occupied a position much like that of Daniel Webster in 1852." More than that, he asserts that after more than a century many of Webster's speeches on public issues would pass muster today "with only a word changed here and there" for conservative politicians speaking on the issues of their time. But Webster is rarely mentioned; hence he is "the forgotten man of American conservatism."

According to the author, Webster favored the businessman, taking the view that anything that helped the businessman helped the workingman too. He accused the Democrats of "extreme injustice" in attacking the tariff as favoring "the rich corporations of New England," whose interests he defended in Congress and in the Courts. To please both sides, in this and in other matters, he condescended to casuistry and demagoguery, says the author, who at times pictures Webster as little more than a practical politician concerned with his own aggrandizement. Somewhat grudgingly he admits his subjects's greatness, yet he gives relatively little space to those abiding qualities and achievements which made Webster a legend.

Nor does Mr. Current dwell much on Webster's private life, which in this case deprives the book of an attraction for which we must go to the standard biographies. This can hardly claim to be one, its primary interest being in Webster's career as a politician. The book leaves one with the unsatisfied feeling which any incomplete portrait sketch gives.

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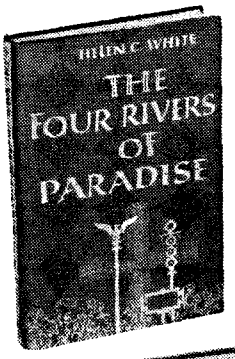

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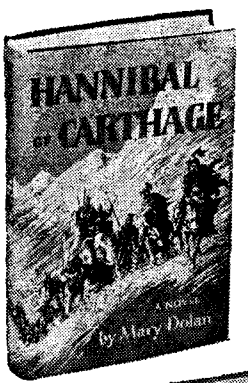

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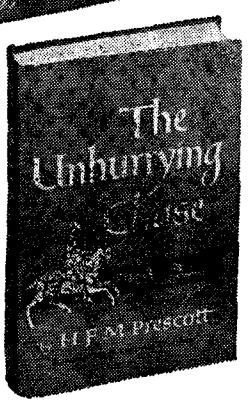

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